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GOLF PRACTICE AND EXERCISE DEVICE

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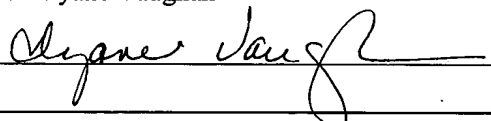
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GOLF PRACTICE AND EXERCISE DEVICE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to golf practice and exercise devices that
5 improve the user's golf swing and develops the muscles used in a golf swing.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

There are many prior devices that have been developed for golfers to practice
to improve their swing. One type suspends a golf ball-sized object from the end of a
10 cord in a position for being struck by the head of a golf club being practice swung by
a golfer. Such devices allow a golfer to practice his swing and improve the technique
and path of a swing in a confined space instead of having to use a driving range.
However, the object being struck is a golf ball or the size of a golf ball and, therefore,
provides little muscle-building resistance.

15 Another type of practice device is a relatively large bag known as an Impact
Bag that is intended to be filled with soft material, such as towels, and is placed
against a stationary object that prevents displacement of the bag. Such a device is
intended to be used to stop a practice swing at the point of impact so that the golfer
can evaluate the club's and his body's positions at impact. It does not allow the golfer
20 to complete the follow-through of a golf swing and to perform a muscle building
exercise by overcoming the resistance of a weight as the club moves through impact
into the follow-through.

In contrast, the present invention provides a combination of practicing
techniques as well as building the muscles used in swinging a golf club.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 Briefly described, the golf practice and exercise device of the present invention includes a frame member having a base portion for supporting the device on a floor or on the ground. The frame member extends upwardly from the base member and has an outwardly extending mounting arm from which an object is swingably
10 suspended in position for striking by a golf clubhead during a normal practice golf swing. The object has a golf clubhead impact surface approaching the size of or greater than the corresponding surface of a standard softball to provide a large target so that the golfer can swing freely without concentration on striking a small target, such as a golf ball. The object also has a mass approaching that of or exceeding that
15 of a standard softball to provide substantial resistance to the impact of a golf club to impose muscular strain on the golfer for muscle development, but the object is limited in mass to allow the head of the golf club to swing the object sufficiently for the golf clubhead to ultimately pass under the object and allow the golfer to complete the follow-through of the golf swing. Thus, the device of the present invention provides
20 for practicing the technique of the golf swing, as well as providing muscle development to enhance the striking force exerted by the golfer when striking a golf ball. In one form, the object may be substantially the same as a standard softball and be approximately 4 to 5 inches in diameter and weigh approximately 4 to 12 ounces, preferably 6 to 7 ounces.

In another form, the object may be substantially the same as a teardrop-shaped punching bag having dimensions and weight similar to those recited above.

In a further form, the object may be substantially the same as a cylindrical body punching bag. The diameter of the object may be approximately 3 to 12 inches,

In any of the embodiments the object may include a cover, such as a pouch or similar covering, made of a relatively soft material, such as a textile fabric of any desired thickness to provide a softening of the impact of the clubhead against the object.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a golf practice and exercise device according to one of the preferred embodiments of the present invention, illustrating a golfer with a golf club in the striking position;

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Fig. 2 is a front elevation view of the device of Fig. 1 illustrating the impact position of a golf clubhead in dotted lines;

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Fig. 3 is a view similar to Fig. 2, illustrating the object of the device of the invention being displaced as a golf clubhead advances past the initial impact position and showing the position of a golf clubhead after it has passed under the object during follow-through;

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Fig. 4 is a view similar to Fig. 2 illustrating the device of the present invention with an alternate form of the object;

Fig. 5 is a view similar to Fig. 2, illustrating the device of the present invention with an object that is capable of alternative use as a swinging object and as a stationary object;

Fig. 6 is a view similar to Fig. 4, illustrating the device of the present invention adapted for suspending the object from the limb of a tree rather than from the arm of a frame; and

Fig. 7 is a perspective view showing an object according to the golf practice and exercise device of the present invention that is attached to a cord that is anchored in the ground.

5 DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

One of the preferred embodiments of the golf practice and exercise device of the present invention is illustrated in Figs. 1, 2 and 3. This device 10 includes a frame 11 having a flat base portion 12 formed for seating on the ground 13 or the floor. Extending upwardly from the base portion 12 is an upright portion 14. At the upper extent of the upright portion 14 a mounting arm 15 projects outwardly over a portion of the base portion 12. At the outer end 16 of the mounting arm 15, an object 17 to be struck by a golfer 22 is suspended by a flexible cord 18 so that the object 17 has a golf clubhead impact surface 19 in position relative to the base portion 12 for striking by a golf clubhead swung by a golfer 22. The size of the golf clubhead impact surface approaches the size of or is greater than the corresponding surface of a baseball to provide a large target so that the golfer can swing freely without concentration on striking a small target as is the case when swinging at a golf ball. To simulate the ground and to prevent damage to a club 24 being swung, a conventional mat 20 is secured to the top of the base portion 12 under the object 17.

20 The flexible cord 18 is attached to a ring 21 that is freely rotatably mounted at the outer end 16 of the arm 15 for rotation of the ring, cord and object about a generally horizontal axis. With this arrangement, the object 17 will swing like a pendulum when it is struck. If the object is of small enough mass and the clubhead 23 strikes with sufficient force, the object 17 may be caused to swing totally around the

arm 15. On the other hand, the weight of the object 17 and the force of the swing may only be sufficient to cause a pendulum-like oscillation of the object 17.

In the embodiment illustrated in Figs. 1, 2 and 3, the object 17 may be substantially the same as a teardrop-shaped punching bag used by boxers when training, having a similar mass that imposes muscular strain on the golfer when struck for muscle development but being limited in mass to allow the head of the golf club to swing the object sufficiently for the golf clubhead to ultimately pass under the object and allow the golfer to complete the follow-through of the golf swing. Typically, the object 17 will be 4 to 5 inches in diameter and weigh approximately 4 to 12 ounces, preferably 6 to 7 ounces. The mass may be provided by a core of tightly wound yarn or string or a sawdust or similar composted filler or yarn or string wound around a core or a sand filler. Various other materials can be used that provide the desired results.

illustrated in Fig. 1, results in him obtaining a proper body turn and positioning at the point of impact. This not only trains the golfer to arrive at a proper ball striking position, but places the golfer in position for continuing through the swing against the resistance of the object 17, thereby providing for practicing of technique as well as building strong muscles that are used in the golf swing.

Because of the mass of the object 17, the golfer knows that he must continue exerting force against the object 17 sufficient to swing it past the impact position so that the clubhead 23 can ultimately move under the object 17 and through completion of the follow-through of the swing. This movement of the object 17 by the clubhead 23 is illustrated at 25 in Fig. 3 and the position of the clubhead after displacing the object 17 and moving under and away therefrom is illustrated at 26 in Fig. 3.

In the preferred embodiment, the mounting arm 15 is approximately 1½ to 5 feet above the ground, preferably 3 feet above the ground, for an optimum swing path of the object 17 in relation to the swing path of the clubhead 23.

In the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 4, the object 27 is a spherical object that is substantially the same size and weight as a conventional softball. It may be approximately 4 to 5 inches in diameter and weigh approximately 4 to 12 ounces, preferably 6 to 7 ounces. Otherwise, this embodiment is identical to the embodiment of Figs. 1, 2 and 3.

Fig. 5 illustrates an object 29 in a form substantially the same as a cylindrical body punching bag used by boxers in training. It may be approximately 3 to 12 inches in diameter, preferably 6 to 10 inches in diameter, and may weigh approximately 1 to 12 pounds, preferably approximately 6 pounds. It may be approximately 10 to 18 inches in height.

5 This embodiment of Fig. 5, includes fastening means in the form of a hook 30 secured and extending upwardly from the base portion 12 and an eyelet 31 secured to and extending downwardly from the object 29 for connection with the hook 30. This fastening means allows the object 17 to be selectively used to restrain the object 29 against movement for alternative use of the object 29 as a stop of the golf club in an impact position, should the golfer desire to use the device in this manner. Preferably, the hook 30 and eyelet 31 would be attached to the base portion 12 and the object 29, respectively, in at least a partially retracted position when not engaged so as not to interfere with or damage the clubhead when the object 29 is used as a moving object as described above. If desired, the object 29 of the embodiment of Fig. 5 can be permanently secured in the stationary position described, or two objects can be used selectively, one for swing and one for stationary use.

15 In the embodiments of Figs. 1-5, the object 17, 27, 29 may be suspended from the outer end 16 of the mounting arm 15 by a thin rigid rod, rather than a flexible cord 18, with the rod being pivoted similarly by attachment to the ring 21 for rotation of the rod and object about the mounting arm 15 when struck by a golf club.

20 The golf practice and exercise device 32 of Fig. 6 is similar to the softball type of device illustrated in Fig. 4, but differs in that the object 33 is suspended from the limb 34 of a tree 35 using a mounting ring 36 attached to the tree limb 34. A mat 36 is disposed on the ground 37 under the object 33, and a cord 38 is attached to the ring 36 and to the object 33, with the length of the cord 38 being adjusted to properly position the object 33 closely adjacent to the mat 36. In this embodiment, the ground and tree serve as the frame, with the trunk of the tree extending as an upright portion and the limb 34 serving as the mounting arm.

Another alternative to the frame described in the embodiments of Figs. 1-6 is the use of a rod or rods extending rigidly downwardly from the upright portion for insertion in the ground to hold the frame in the upright position. The ground would then serve as the base portion and a mat would be placed on the ground with the object to be struck being suspended from an arm portion projecting from the upright portion as in the embodiments illustrated and described above.

While specific shapes of the object of the golf practice and exercise device of the present invention are illustrated and described with reference to Figs. 1-7, it should be understood that other shapes are within the scope of the present invention.

Basically, regardless of the shape, the object should have a golf clubhead impact surface approaching the size of or greater than the corresponding surface of a baseball to provide a large target so that the golfer can swing freely without concentration on striking a small target, and the object should have a mass approaching that of or exceeding that of a baseball to provide substantial resistance to the impact of a golf club to impose muscular strain on the golfer for muscle development, but being limited in mass to allow the head of the golf club to swing the object sufficiently for the golf clubhead to ultimately pass under the object and allow the golfer to complete the follow-through of the golf swing. In the spherical form of the object, it is approximately 3 to 8 inches in diameter, preferably 3 inches in diameter, and weighs 3 to 12 ounces, preferably 5 ounces. In all embodiments, a filler may be inserted in the object to obtain the desired mass as described above with regard to the embodiment of Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 4.

In any of the embodiments the object may include a cover, such as a pouch or similar covering, made of a relatively soft material, such as a textile fabric of any

embodiments and adaptations of the present invention other than those herein described, as well as many variations, modifications and equivalent arrangements, will be apparent from or reasonably suggested by the present invention and the foregoing description thereof, without departing from the substance or scope of the